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COMMONWEALTH FUND PROGRAM FOR
PREVENTION OF DELINQUENCY

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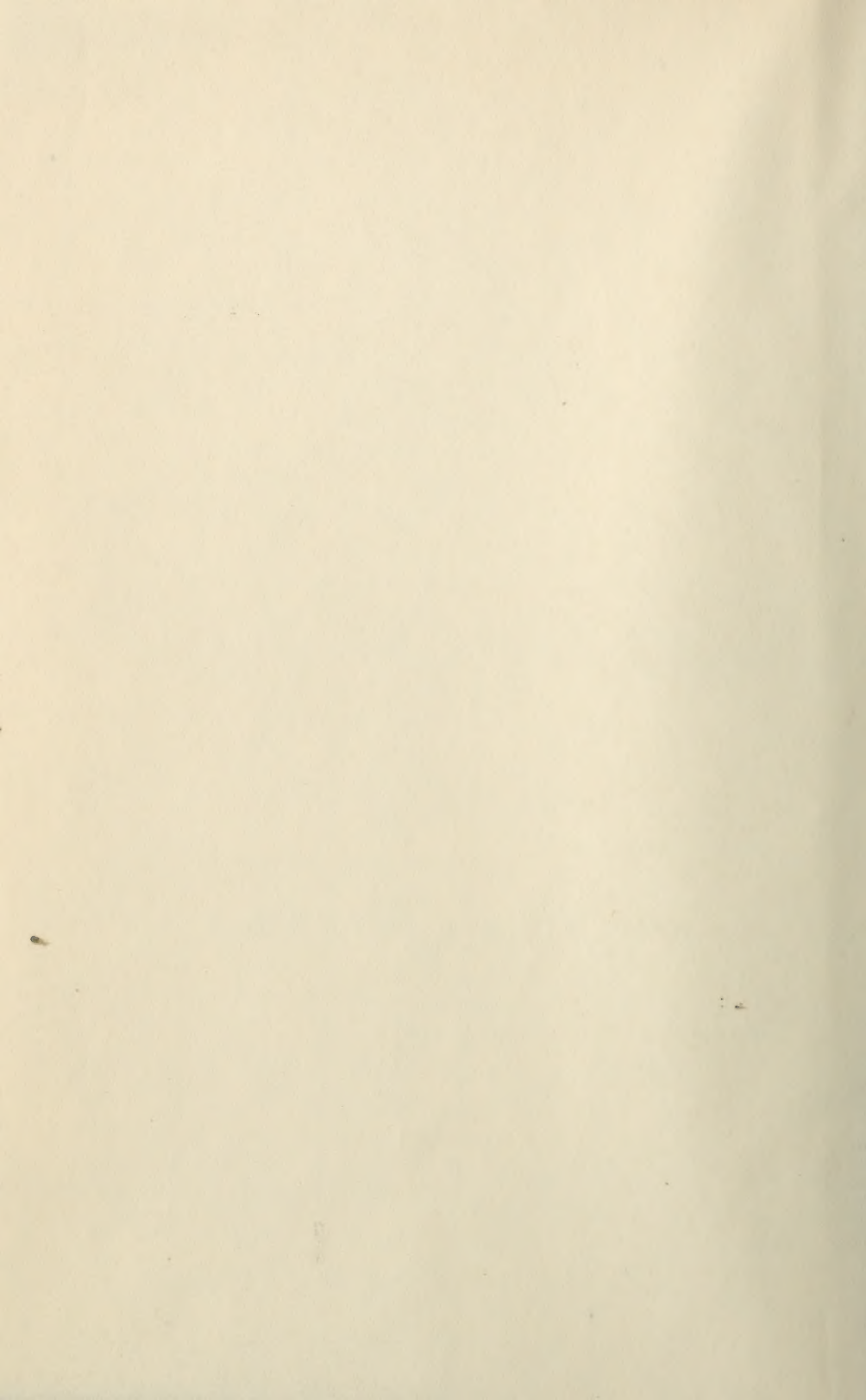
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The Commonwealth Fund Program
for the
Prevention of Delinquency

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THIS statement concerning the purposes, methods, and organization of the Commonwealth Fund Program for the Prevention of Delinquency is republished from the fourth annual report of the General Director of the Fund. Revisions have been made, however, to shorten it and bring it up to date.

May 1, 1923.

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THE COMMONWEALTH FUND PROGRAM

FOR THE

PREVENTION OF DELINQUENCY

Any intelligent undertaking in the field of delinquency must necessarily be considered as only a part of that larger enterprise for child welfare in which directly or indirectly every social worker is engaged; for the ramifications of the influences affecting the child and his development extend not only into every branch of social endeavor, but far beyond those efforts which are recognized technically as social work. A comprehensive plan would, of necessity, therefore, touch upon a larger number of factors than could well be included in any practicable single undertaking. Housing, eugenics, preventive and educational health work, industrial conditions, organized recreation—indicate but a few of the countless problems which require some degree of solution if the task of preventing delinquency is some day to reach its maximum of success.

In determining a plan of action, therefore, the Commonwealth Fund sought a method whereby its efforts might be applied at certain strategic points, in the hope that these efforts might lead to the increase of resources readily available to workers in the field.

In this, as in other fields, there has been from time immemorial a vast deal of effort and money expended in some sort of care for those who have fallen by the wayside in one way or another. Much has been done along relief lines—such as the maintenance of institutions for the old and broken—as well as in the custodial or punitive care of offenders against society, and there appears to be increasing rather than decreasing necessity for care of this type. Only somewhat recently has the

idea gained strength that perhaps we shall some day have to spend less for such purposes—and have a better world in which to live—if we make an intelligent effort to discover and remove some of the causes of these conditions. Just as it appears that good health, if that can be reasonably assured, and better living and working conditions—toward all of which definite progress is being made—may sometime greatly reduce the burden of relief, so also it seems obvious that we shall perhaps have fewer “hardened” criminals if we pay a little more attention to checking the processes which bring about that hardening. The Commonwealth Fund, therefore, without gainsaying either the need or the value of remedial work, has felt that perhaps the greatest and most helpful opportunity in the particular field of delinquency, as in others, lay in that form of constructive effort which is designated by the term “preventive.”

Perhaps no field illustrates more pointedly the persistence of archaic and outworn methods and ideas than the treatment of offenders, whether juvenile or adult. The establishment of the juvenile court has, to be sure, done away to a considerable extent with the arraignment of children as criminals; but there still remains the type of court which “disposes” of its “cases” with little or no real knowledge on which to base action; there still remain probation systems which totally misconceive their purpose; the old miserable theory of punishment has not disappeared; even the most enlightened workers with the delinquent are constantly occupied with the patching of end results which should largely never have been permitted to occur. Our prisons and penitentiaries hold many criminals who might be useful, free citizens to-day had an intelligent and painstaking effort been made in the first instance to understand and help them. These are known facts.

Only very recently has the conception developed that early study of the individual who is out of adjustment, and scien-

tific diagnosis of his social difficulty, may make possible a considerable degree of prevention; that carefully differentiated treatment—physical, mental, and social—based on such a diagnosis, may produce results quite as salutary as may be found in the physician's practice, may even direct many a young offender on the pathway toward good citizenship instead of toward the life of the "repeater." To the Commonwealth Fund it has appeared that for the child who is tending toward delinquency, who fails to "get along" in his school, home, or neighborhood environment, who is troublesome or "different" or "maladjusted," who comes for the first time before the juvenile court—for him the greatest single need is that he be accurately and adequately understood; that his problems, difficulties, and motives be appreciated—in short, that the decision as to what is the best thing to do for him be based on a thoroughgoing knowledge. Therefore, the Fund has chosen to concentrate its efforts in the following directions:

1. To develop the psychiatric study of difficult, predelinquent, and delinquent children in the schools and the juvenile courts; to develop sound methods of treatment based on such study; and to provide courses of training along sound lines for those qualified and desiring to work in this field.

2. To demonstrate in a number of widely scattered cities the value of such psychiatric study and treatment applied to children of this sort referred from juvenile courts, schools, and other agencies.

3. To develop the work of the visiting teacher whereby the invaluable early contacts which our school systems make possible with every child may be utilized for the understanding and development of the child.

4. To extend by various educational efforts the knowledge and use of these methods.

ORGANIZATION AND PROGRESS OF THE PROGRAM

In line with this purpose, the Board of Directors of the Commonwealth Fund adopted, on November 9, 1921, a Program for the Prevention of Delinquency, providing for joint endeavor on the part of four social agencies and organized in four divisions as follows:

I. *The New York School of Social Work.* At this institution, of which Mr. Porter R. Lee is director, fifteen annual fellowships have been provided for students of suitable qualifications who desire to fit themselves for work as psychiatric social workers, visiting teachers, or probation officers. Special courses are offered in these fields for fellowship students and others, and the academic work has been strengthened and supplemented by the establishment of a psychiatric clinic known as the Bureau of Children's Guidance. This clinic, under the direction of Dr. Bernard Glueck, is devoted to the study and treatment of children presenting special problems. It is affiliated with five public schools of the New York system, in each of which has been placed a well-qualified visiting teacher (see Division III). Children requiring attention from the clinic are drawn from these schools, as well as from some other sources. The intake, however, is definitely limited for two reasons: It is intended, in the first place, to make the work thorough, with particular emphasis on treatment, in order to demonstrate its full potentialities; and, secondly, as the training of students is a fundamental purpose, much of the time of the staff is required for that side of the work. Particular effort is directed toward making the service valuable to the individual child. It is felt to be of fundamental importance that the children be regarded as human beings to be helped, not as subjects for laboratory study.

The Bureau of Children's Guidance received its first child

on January 27, 1922, and up to May 1, 1923, had accepted 178 children. Twenty-nine different students have been in training. Staff members of the Bureau have addressed many conferences and small groups of parents, teachers, and social workers.

Since the Program did not go into effect until late in 1921, the New York School of Social Work granted only three fellowships for the remainder of the school year 1921-22. Nine fellowships were granted for the summer school sessions. The recipients came from one middle western state, three southern states, and three eastern states. All the fifteen fellowships were awarded for 1922-23. The states of Colorado, Iowa, Alabama, North Carolina, and Virginia, and the District of Columbia sent one student each; Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and New York, three each.

II. *National Committee for Mental Hygiene—Division for the Prevention of Delinquency.* This division of the Program is devoted exclusively to psychiatric work. Provision has been made for two mobile demonstration clinics under the direction of Dr. V. V. Anderson. Each is staffed by a psychiatrist in charge, an assistant psychiatrist, a psychologist, social workers and necessary clerical help. It is the purpose of these clinics primarily to conduct demonstrations, in cities desiring the service, of the value of psychiatric work in the diagnosis and treatment of children referred from juvenile courts, public schools, and other sources.

Thirteen cities made application for the first demonstration, and after careful consideration St. Louis was selected. The choice was governed in this case, as it will be in others, by the degree of local interest, the probability of the demonstration's resulting in the establishment of a permanent clinic, and similar considerations. The clinic opened on May 10, 1922, in offices provided by the city in the Municipal Building adjacent to the Juvenile Court. From the start it enjoyed the hearty co-

operation of the city departments as well as of social agencies and individuals. The Board of Health and the Hospital Division placed laboratory facilities at its disposal and a considerable corps of volunteers made their services available. The public schools furnished a physician for physical examinations, local psychiatrists and psychologists assisted the staff, and several social workers and probation officers gave full time to the work for purposes of training. All of these, working with the regular staff, enabled the clinic to be of practical value to the Juvenile Court and also to some extent to the schools and other agencies.

The procedure of the clinic included complete examination—physical, psychological, psychiatric, and social—of each child referred to it, on the basis of which recommendations for treatment were made to the court. While the carrying out of the recommendations was primarily the responsibility of the probation service, the social workers of the staff co-operated closely, took definite supervision of special cases, and followed up each case. Treatment, therefore, as in the case of the Bureau of Children's Guidance, was emphasized.

The demonstration in St. Louis was concluded in November, 1922, when a plan was already formulated for the establishment of a permanent local clinic, pending the organization of which a volunteer staff continued the activities started by the demonstration clinic. On March 2, 1923, an ordinance was passed creating a permanent clinic under the Department of Public Welfare.

The demonstration clinic of the Commonwealth Fund Program which had thus successfully carried out its purpose in St. Louis, was moved to Norfolk, Virginia, where in January, 1923, it began a similar demonstration. The second demonstration clinic was meanwhile being organized and began its work in Dallas, Texas, on February 13, 1923. It is expected that

these two clinics will spend from six to twelve months on each demonstration.

In selecting cities for demonstrations by the mobile psychiatric clinics, it is intended that preference shall be given to those where the demonstration is most likely to result in a permanent clinic which will itself serve as a model for its section of the country.

The work of this division also includes a psychiatric clinic* established for a two-year period in connection with the child welfare demonstration now being conducted in Monmouth County, New Jersey, which in the main is rural with a few small cities. This clinic was organized to serve the children in the public schools and the community generally, in such a way as to bring psychiatric service to each child, and thereby, through early contact, to discover and treat cases of mental conflict, intelligence inferiority, conduct disorders, etc., at the time when the child is most plastic and when such treatment is most likely to be effective.

The Monmouth County work was begun in January, 1922. A general survey was conducted in six schools with an enrolment of 816 pupils. An examination—physical, mental, and social—was given to each child. As a result of this examination, all children presenting any special problem received a further complete and intensive individual study. It was found that 65 out of 112 pupils in one of the six schools, for instance, and 80 out of 225 in another school, presented some form of problem. Each of these was further studied and arrangements were made for the carrying out of the necessary treatment.

The clinic is located in Red Bank, a city of 12,000 people,

* This activity, although included in the Program, has been financed by the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund. By arrangement with that Fund, the Commonwealth Fund is now supplementing the funds available for the clinic.

conveniently accessible to most of the population of the county. Children are referred to it by the schools, other social agencies, and individuals.

Medical recommendations are carried out under the direction of the public health nurses of the Monmouth County Organization for Social Service; educational adjustments are made through a visiting teacher supplied under Division III of the Program, and attached to the staff of the clinic; social and home adjustments are arranged through the social workers in co-operation with the visiting teacher and the psychiatric social worker.

III. *The Public Education Association of the City of New York.* This division of the Program comprises two related undertakings in the field of the visiting teacher, and a special grading experiment in one of the public schools of New York City.

The first undertaking provides for the placing of a visiting teacher in each of the five public schools affiliated with the Bureau of Children's Guidance, as mentioned under Division I. These teachers were engaged and at work early in 1922. Their task is to bring to the attention of the clinic those children needing its service, to assist in the special treatment recommended, and to aid in the field training of students from the School of Social Work.

The second undertaking is under the supervision of the National Committee on Visiting Teachers, affiliated with the Public Education Association. This Committee was especially organized for the purpose, with Mr. Howard W. Nudd, Director of the Public Education Association, as chairman. It is carrying out the plan of placing thirty visiting teachers for three-year periods, for demonstration purposes, in as many communities in different parts of the United States. Selection of communities is limited to those which have not previously

had a visiting teacher, and which offer to contribute one-third of the expense of the demonstration.

In February, 1922, communications calling attention to the opportunity were addressed to the superintendents of schools in a large number of communities east of the Mississippi, and in April to communities west of the Mississippi. A total of 270 applications was received. Additional information was secured from most of these by the questionnaire method and the most promising were selected for staff investigation. As a result of this process of selection, by March, 1923, visiting teachers were at work in the following seventeen communities:

Rural Counties:

Monmouth, New Jersey.	Huron, Ohio.
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Cities and Towns:

Burlington, Vermont.	Kalamazoo, Michigan.
Rochester, Pennsylvania.	Sioux Falls, South Dakota.
Birmingham, Alabama.	Hutchinson, Kansas.
Durham, North Carolina.	Sioux City, Iowa.
Richmond, Virginia.	Lincoln, Nebraska.
Bluefield, West Virginia.	Columbus, Georgia.
Warren, Ohio.	Detroit, Michigan.
Springfield, Illinois.	

In addition to these communities, Coatesville, Pennsylvania, Omaha, Nebraska, and Tulsa, Oklahoma, have completed arrangements to begin the work in the near future.

The selection of the visiting teachers has been very carefully provided for. Eighty-three candidates were considered for the first fifteen positions. A considerable number of those chosen were given the opportunity for special training at the New York School of Social Work. Arrangements were made for the careful supervision of the work by an adequate staff under the direction of Miss Jane Culbert of the Public Education Association.

A word is perhaps desirable as to why emphasis is laid upon the visiting teacher in a program dealing with delinquency. It is well recognized that the visiting teacher is not primarily interested in delinquents nor occupied with them. On the contrary, she is dealing with the school child, in an effort to bring to bear such constructive influence as may be needed, in helping him to get the most out of his school life. She is concerned primarily with those children who, for one reason or another, do not seem to be sufficiently well adjusted to secure the full benefits of school life. Why, then, should the visiting teacher be a chief factor in a program for the prevention of delinquency? The answer is that the program is one primarily for *prevention*.

Practically all children are for a shorter or longer period in our schools. The public school, coming into close contact with the lives of over twenty million young boys, girls, and adolescents, is—or should be—our greatest social welfare agency. A vast deal of delinquency and pre-delinquent conduct is caused by family and neighborhood conditions, and the teacher has unequaled opportunities to observe the first signs of undesirable conduct on the part of a child. But, unfortunately, however socialized her point of view, the teacher, in our city schools at least, is so overburdened with her professional duties—and increasingly so—that there is little she can do about it. Right here lies the value of the visiting teacher.

The visiting teacher is an employé of the Board of Education and usually works in a single school. Her chief task is to help pupils to secure the greatest good from their educational opportunities. She is not a regular instructor, but spends her time in employing social case work methods to overcome undesirable influences and handicaps affecting the pupils and to work out for and with them better personal, educational, and social adjustments. She strives to assist individual children with their many human problems, to bring about greater under-

standing and co-operation between parents and teachers, and to secure prompt assistance from various agencies in the community.

When a visiting teacher arouses a child's interest in his school work, gets his parents to take an intelligent interest in his progress and in the school's point of view, sees that his health is looked out for at home, sees that Johnny's mother understands that late hours and a candy and coffee diet may have much to do with his inability in arithmetic, or that Susie can scarcely be expected to be keen about her school work when too much of her time at home goes to washing dishes or taking care of the baby—she is simply working out a normal adaptation between a child and his daily life; and the child, or the grown person, for that matter, who is properly adapted to his environment, seldom becomes a delinquent.

The visiting teacher, in short, occupies a strategic position where she is in touch with large numbers of children and where, with the assistance of the school staff, she can learn which boys and girls are likely to develop wayward habits. She comes in contact with these problems at an early period, before the habits of the children have become fixed; and thus she can be a very great force in the prevention of delinquency.

So much for the two undertakings in the field of the visiting teacher and the explanation as to the place of visiting teacher work in a program dealing with delinquency.

The grading experiment in a New York public school antedates the Program, having been begun several years ago. It has now reached a stage where the grading of the children, based upon group tests, and individual tests where necessary, has produced very definite results, indicating the need for a more careful consideration of individual abilities and characteristics in connection with the classification and education of children in the public schools. A report of the progress and results of

this work has been prepared during the past year and is now nearly ready for publication. During the remaining period of the experiment an attempt will be made to discover, in view of the facts already given, what modifications of the ordinary public school curriculum may be made in a city like New York in order to accommodate the work to the individual child. This work, like other enterprises under the Program, while expected to yield considerable knowledge of value to educators, has been conducted in such a way as to render the utmost possible service to the children concerned.

IV. *The Joint Committee on Methods of Preventing Delinquency.* This Committee, organized especially for the work of the Program, has two chief purposes:

First, to provide a co-ordinating agency for the Program as a whole;

Second, to act as an interpreter of the work through the publication of educational articles based on the activities of the Program and on other efforts in the field of delinquency, and to publish the results of special studies.

For several months the Committee had no staff, but met frequently for informal discussion. Comprised originally only of representatives of the various participating organizations, the Committee enjoyed the benefit of the varying points of view of the psychiatrist, the educator, and the social worker. The sessions were of marked value in integrating the entire enterprise and insuring harmonious and co-ordinated operation. With the development of the work the Committee's membership has been enlarged to include persons of experience and specialized knowledge, not otherwise connected with the Program. Three such members have already been elected. The staff of the Committee is organized under Graham Romeyn Taylor as Executive Director and Mabel Brown Ellis as Assistant Director.

Two special committees made up of representatives from the

various Division staffs have been appointed and are at work in ways designed to carry out the function of the Joint Committee. One is on Clinical Methods and the other on the Preparation of Case Material for Teaching and Publication.

In its co-ordinating service to the Divisions of the Program the Joint Committee has brought together the personnel connected with the various clinics for conference and group thought upon common problems. This has resulted in valuable interchange of information and experience, the adoption of uniform records and statistical plans, clearer definition of the type of child who should have the benefit of clinic service and treatment, progress in common understanding of terminology, and the establishment of a common working basis for the clinics as parts of a unified undertaking, which should facilitate effective presentation of the progress achieved during the period of the Program.

Enquiries and field studies of value to the Program as a whole or to any of its Divisions come within the working plans of the Joint Committee staff. Two studies are being completed. One covers the noteworthy development of the visiting teacher work in the Rochester, New York, public schools, the other is a study, from the standpoint of the social worker, of psychiatric clinics in relation to the handling of children presenting behavior problems, drawing particularly on the experience of the demonstration clinic in St. Louis.

An information service is being developed by the staff of the Joint Committee to serve not only the personnel connected with the Program, but enquirers in this country and abroad. The publication of pamphlets and other literature will facilitate this service, but it is expected that many enquirers will need and deserve the best information and counsel by correspondence which the Joint Committee can offer, calling not only upon its own staff members but upon the staffs of the other Divisions.

As the Program develops, the publication plans are expected to include case studies, results of enquiries and field studies, and more general articles. The purpose of all publications will be to create a wider knowledge and understanding of sound methods for the prevention of delinquency, and it is hoped that they will include the interpretation of activities without, as well as within, the Program.

AS TO RESULTS

It is a legitimate question as to how far delinquency and crime can be prevented. No sane person harbors the delusion that a total abolition of crime from human society is probable. Indeed, if marked progress in that direction is to be made, it will be but slowly and as the result of many efforts in many different fields. But at least there lies a hope for better things in the gradually changing attitude of thinking people toward the question of the treatment accorded the delinquent and the criminal. From that change of attitude is arising a new conception of the methods which are essential to progress.

The Commonwealth Fund does not expect to reform the world. The definite measurable results of the Program for the Prevention of Delinquency may even be difficult to ascertain. But, if that Program shall succeed in ever so small a degree in demonstrating the value of new methods of approach, and in pointing the way to what may be accomplished with the individual by the basing of *adequate* treatment upon *adequate* knowledge, the effort will have been worth while.

COMMITTEES CONNECTED WITH THE PROGRAM

DIVISION I

Committee on Fellowships—New York School of Social Work.

PORTER R. LEE, *Chairman.*

BERNARD GLUECK, M.D.

BARRY C. SMITH.

DIVISION II

Division for the Prevention of Delinquency—National Committee for Mental Hygiene.

Advisory Committee.

THOMAS W. SALMON, M.D., *Chairman.*

HON. CHARLES W. HOFFMAN.

MISS EMMA O. LUNDBERG.

HERBERT C. PARSONS.

BARRY C. SMITH.

WALTER E. FERNALD, M.D.

LEWELLYS F. BARKER, M.D.

CHARLES H. JUDD, M.D.

PROF. ARNOLD GESELL.

J. PRENTICE MURPHY.

DIVISION III

National Committee on Visiting Teachers, affiliated with the Public Education Association of the City of New York.

HOWARD W. NUDD, *Chairman.*

MISS JANE CULBERT, *Secretary.*

V. V. ANDERSON, M.D.

J. H. BEVERIDGE.

HENRY W. THURSTON.

BARRY C. SMITH.

MISS EMMA O. CASE.

MISS ANNA B. PRATT.

M. L. BRITTAIN.

R. G. JONES.

GRAHAM ROMEYN TAYLOR.

DIVISION IV

Joint Committee on Methods of Preventing Delinquency.

PORTER R. LEE, *Chairman.*

BARRY C. SMITH, *Secretary.*

V. V. ANDERSON, M.D.

HOWARD W. NUDD.

MISS JULIA LATHROP.

BERNARD GLUECK, M.D.

HENRY C. MORRISON.

J. PRENTICE MURPHY.

THOMAS W. SALMON, M.D.

EXECUTIVES IN CHARGE OF ACTIVITIES PARTICIPAT-
ING IN THE PROGRAM

DIVISION I

New York School of Social Work, 105 East 22d Street, New York City.

PORTER R. LEE, Director.

Bureau of Children's Guidance.

BERNARD GLUECK, M.D., Director.

MARION KENWORTHY, M.D., Assistant Director.

DIVISION II

National Committee for Mental Hygiene—Division for the Prevention of Delinquency, 370 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

V. V. ANDERSON, M.D., Director.

MILDRED SCOVILLE, Executive Secretary.

Demonstration Clinic No. 1.

BRUCE B. ROBINSON, M.D., Director.

Demonstration Clinic No. 2.

LAWSON LOWREY, M.D., Director.

Monmouth County Clinic.

CHRISTINE M. LEONARD, M.D., Psychiatrist in Charge.

DIVISION III

Public Education Association of the City of New York, 8 West 40th Street, New York City.

HOWARD W. NUDD, Director.

National Committee on Visiting Teachers.

JANE F. CULBERT, Secretary and Staff Executive.

Grading Experiment.

ELIZABETH IRWIN, Psychologist in Charge.

DIVISION IV

Joint Committee on Methods of Preventing Delinquency, 50 East 42d Street, New York City.

GRAHAM ROMEYN TAYLOR, Executive Director.

MABEL BROWN ELLIS, Assistant Director.



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